

to be bound to the King and to serve him in his expeditions with Sicilians, Calabrians, and Apulians in the toil, the heat, the sweat of war. They added naively, "we refuse to consort with so great a King, for our lines are cast in leisurely places, and we were never accustomed to dangerous ways of life." All that either army could effect was a declaration of neutrality, while Crescentius apparently continued to hold his own in the city.<sup>1</sup>

The two hosts were now facing one another, and had Roger been of the same temper as Rainulf he would have settled the issue there. But feeling himself too weak or too far from his base, he commenced a retreat. The historian Falco, who is prejudiced against him, describes it as a disgraceful flight. Robert's advance-guard followed hard on Roger's rear, making havoc among his Saracens; while the King, riding swiftly by night and day and by little-known mountain ways, revolved in his mind an oath that when the day of vengeance was come he would pay back well all that he was receiving now.

The silent vow was characteristic of the King. Otherwise we may think Falco's account over-coloured. Whether an organised

retreat became  
a flight or no, Roger was able when he  
came to  
Nocera, "Prince Robert's chiefest  
town," to break  
down the wooden bridge over the  
Sarno, where  
that river joins the Sabato. He then  
began the  
siege of the castle of Nocera, and  
prepared for

<sup>1</sup> **Falco, 1132.**